

REMARKS

The Final Office Action dated June 22, 2007 has been carefully considered. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended. Claims 2-8, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16 are in this application. No new matter has been entered.

The previously presented claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0029444 to Lyle.

Lyle discloses cylindrical wall (18) does not comprise resilient projections (21). Instead, resilient projections (21) project from flange (16) and are separate/distinct from side wall (18). The resilient projections (21,41) of Lyle are able to flex independently of one another. It is this independent flexing of the resilient projections (21) that in use allows the fastening member (11) to engage recesses (42) of an identical fastening member (10) in a snap-fit manner.

As noted by the Examiner, the previously filed claims do not state that the male portion and engaging portions are monolithic. The claims have been amended to recite that the male portion comprises a cylindrical or annular shaped wall being formed of a plurality of circumferentially extending engaging portions, each engaging portion being separated from the next engaging portion by a circumferentially extending non engaging portion.

In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims, Lyle does not teach or suggest a male portion comprising a cylindrical or annular shaped wall being formed from a plurality of circumferentially extending engaging portions, each engaging portion being separated from the next engaging portion by a circumferentially extending non engaging portion, as defined in claim 15. In the present invention, the plurality of circumferentially extending engaging portions (26) form part of curved wall (34) and do not flex independently of one another. In contrast, Lyle relies upon identical members (18, 38) to engage one another rather than a male to female arrangement.

The present invention provides disengaged fastener without sacrificing strength, because of the continuous cylindrical or annular shaped wall, formed by the combination of engaging and non-engaging portions. In contrast, to achieve the same effect using the individual projections of the stud disclosed by Lyle would require these projections to have a very small accurate length, and result in them having low durability. Accordingly, Lyle does not teach or suggest each of

the limitations of the present claims and the invention defined by the present claims is not anticipated by Lyle.

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious in view of Lyle. Lyle discloses projections extending radially from the base (claim 1). In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims, Lyle does not teach or suggest a cylindrical or annular wall formed of the combination of engaging and nonengaging portions and a outer face of the engaging portions are inclined at an angle in the range of 13° to 23°. As described on page 3, lines 16-24, the present invention allows the force required to subsequently separate the male and female portions to be controlled by varying the angle of the face of the engaging portions. Accordingly, the separation force can be chosen for a particular fabric. In contrast, Lyle teaches protrusions radially extending from a base. There is no teaching or suggestion of the advantages of controlling the separation force based on the angle of the engaging portions. To the contrary, the structure of Lyle operates in a different manner and selection of the angle of the engaging portions would not be significant in the separate force. Accordingly, the invention defined by claims 7 and 8 is not obvious in view of Lyle.

Claims 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious in view of Lyle in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,933,929 to Kawakami et al.

Kawakami et al. disclose a male button including a tapering axial shank. In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims, Kawakami et al. do not teach or suggest a male portion comprising a cylindrical or annular shaped wall being formed from a plurality of circumferentially extending engaging portions, each engaging portion being separated from the next engaging portion by a circumferentially extending non engaging portion. Accordingly, Kawakami et al. do not cure the deficiencies of Lyle described above and the invention defined by the present claims is not obvious in view of Lyle in combination with Kawakami et al.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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